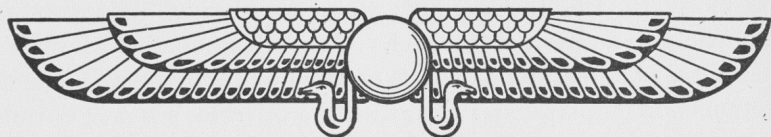


"Point out the 'Way'—However dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness."



MERCURY.

EDITORIAL + STAFF:

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THE RATIONALE OF HYPNOTISM AND MESMERISM.

[Concluded.]

I SAID, a short time since, that the astral senses are more powerful than those we term physical; this seems to me conclusively proven by the fact that some persons are clairvoyant while in the magnetic state. Paracelsus says:

"Dreams, forebodings, prescience, prognostications and presentiments are the gifts of the sidereal, and are not imparted to the elementary body. * * * Now, the cause and origin of this divination is thus: That man is possessed of an astral body."

Clairvoyance can hardly be doubted now, and it certainly cannot be accounted for on the ordinary theory of vision. This, and the kindred phenomena of thought-transference, intro-vision, the ability to predict the termination of the sleep or of a disease, etc., belongs to the astral senses, which are set free, more or less, both in the ordinary and induced sleep. Some people are clairvoyant in the waking state; this is because their physical organs can vibrate in response to the astral centers. This last often accompanies a diseased state of the body.

The magnetic differs from ordinary sleep in its being brought about by the operator's magnetism, and he is thus *en rapport* with

the intellectual man. Here, again, we see the difference between the mesmeric and the hypnotic state, for during hypnosis it is impossible to arouse the intellect. You will remember Mesmer's theory that the magnetic fluid is capable of receiving all kinds of motions and impressions: this, with the operator's power of controlling it, is the secret of his influence over the subject. It is *the only way* in which he can be affected by the operator, who may suggest as he will, but unless the subject identifies himself with that suggestion voluntarily it can have no effect. I do not here refer to physical suggestion, for the operator has power over the subject's body, but even *that* is a doubtful power.

Let us now examine suggestion: The word "suggestion" is commonly confined to hypnotic and mesmeric experiments and people generally believe that it has no existence except at one of these seances. They would, doubtless, be greatly surprised to hear that suggestion plays the greater part in their every-day life. It is the suggestion from what we see and hear that arouses the nobler or the baser parts of our nature. We cannot look, I say, we cannot *see* anything without it modifying our mental substance and causing us to think about it. Thus, the mind is constantly being modified by the endless impressions it receives through the senses. All this is suggestion, to which we are more or less abject slaves. Suggestion, then, is not confined to a seance, because our mind is modified by every impression, subjective and objective, that comes before it.

Let us take what is called "post-hypnotic" suggestion. H. P. B. says that it is "through the vibrations—only *atomic*, not *molecular*—produced by that act of energy called WILL in the ether of space (therefore on quite a different plane) that the *super-hypnotic* state (*i. e.*, suggestion, &c.) is induced." (*Induced*, not produced.)

Let us endeavor to explain this: Theosophy postulates that every thought creates, *nolens volens*, a form or impression in the astral sphere. H. P. B. speaks (in the S. D.) of "the mysterious power of thought, which enables it to produce external, perceptible, phenomenal results by its own inherent energy. The ancients held that *any idea will manifest itself externally, if one's attention is deeply concentrated upon it*. Similarly, *an intense volition will be followed by the desired result*." This much-ridiculed

thought-form, postulated by Theosophy, is proved to be a fact by the experiments of the French hypnotists and others. They found that an *imaginary* object followed all the laws of optics; so that, if you suggest to a subject that the picture of a bird is on a blank piece of paper, and you form a clear thought of your suggestion, the subject will see and describe the bird minutely, although you only said he would see "a bird." Further than this, remove the paper to such a distance that he can no longer see it distinctly, give him an opera glass and he can once more see it clearly, just as though it were an ordinary picture. Still more, take the paper to another clairvoyant subject (who knows nothing of your suggestion) and the picture is as real to him as it was to the first. This experiment can be carried further, if one has the faculty of concentration and of forming clear thought images, and the picture can, by the same means, be made to appear to any person in the ordinary waking state; in fact, the truth is, in proportion to the clearness of the thought will be the *materiality* of the image produced.

This is the secret of suggestion: there is *no* power of one will over another—the WILL is a divine faculty and can *not* be overruled—but there *is* one man playing upon the weakness of another, that weakness being the inability to control the mind.

Suppose I wish to suggest that my subject do a certain act at, say, twelve o'clock on the following day. By the very fact of wishing him to do the act *I am forced to make a mental picture of it*. Now, what happens then?

A Master writes in a letter to Mr. Sinnett:

"Every thought of man, upon being evolved, passes into another world and becomes an active entity by associating itself—coalescing, we might term it—with an elemental; that is to say, with one of the semi-intelligent forces of the kingdom. It survives as an active intelligence—a creature of the mind's begetting—for a longer or shorter period, proportionate to the original intensity of the cerebral action which generated it. Thus, a good thought is perpetuated as an active, beneficent power, an evil one as a maleficent demon."

You remember what Van Helmont says:

"When the imagination is strongly excited, the soul engenders

a real or an essential idea. * * * When this ideal entity spreads itself externally as vital spirit, it requires but a slight excitation to travel to a distance, and to execute the behests forced upon it by the will. * * * The will sends forth and directs this substance, which, once launched, like light, and not being material, *is not arrested either by distance or by time.*"

So, my thought that my subject do so and so at a specified time is vitalized, as Van Helmont and the Adept say, and is not arrested either by distance or by time. This thought is a living force, and, like the downward force in the alarm of a clock, will become active when the hour strikes; then it will come before the mind of the subject. I have previously shown how the mind is modified by every impression, subjective or objective; and my thought will follow the usual course. It will come to him like any other impression and be referred to the judgment and the will; if these are not very active the suggestion will probably be carried out, as would *any* clear suggestion—whether hypnotic (so-called) or otherwise. This theory of post-hypnotic suggestion is at once simple and clear.

As to suggestion while the subject is in the hypnotic or mesmeric state.

Fascination is a half-hypnotic state in which only a portion of the brain is affected. The fascinated person is peculiarly susceptible to suggestion, but as it is a sub-conscious state, no suggestion that requires the intervention of intellect can be carried out; such would, in all probability, only waken the subject.

In the case of a purely hypnotic subject, he is more or less unconscious; the positive mind, judgment and will are, as it were, switched off, and only the automatic man is left. That is, the physical form which is composed of a number of minute lives, co-ordinated and arranged for the purposes of existence, and these lives have been trained to respond in a particular manner to particular stimulations. I have already discussed the phenomena of that state and shown that unless the suggestion is capable of being performed automatically, it would have no more effect than if addressed to a block of wood.

With regard to Mesmerism, you may say that subjects in this state often do the most absurd things—would they do so if they

were more conscious than when in the waking state? I reply: This is so; but the reason lies in the diseased imagination of the subject *himself*. He is put to sleep while under the firm conviction that he will be wholly in the power of the operator and that he *must* do just what he is bid. Again, many subjects never pass beyond a dream state. So the suggestion is generally acted upon, if harmless; but many a mesmeric subject refuses point blank to carry out a suggestion to which he is opposed and the operator cannot then make him.

The great lesson pointed out by our study of Hypnotism and Mesmerism is that we should so concentrate ourselves that we shall not be unduly influenced by the multitudinous suggestions we receive in daily life, and thus we shall become more useful to ourselves and the world at large.

Summary.

In briefly summarizing the foregoing paper, I will put these points especially forward:

1. The radical difference between the hypnotic and magnetic states: Hypnotism is a modification of the normal vibration of the nervous centres, while the magnetic or induced sleep is brought about by a change of polarity in the body.
2. The great harmfulness of the indiscriminate practice of Hypnotism, as it deranges the nerve fluids and the circulation of the blood; further than this, it becomes easier with each attempt to place a person in this state of artificial death—for this change of vibration is the first process of death—until, after a longer or shorter period, the person falls into the state directly his eye or mind becomes fixed for an instant.
3. The value of a practical knowledge of the rationale of Mesmerism (or Animal Magnetism), as by its means a physician can gain control of and cure many nervous diseases, while all ailments can be beneficially affected.
4. The extreme cruelty of thoughtless experiments with magnetic subjects, and the danger of unduly developing the faculty known as Clairvoyance, this last provoking error and engendering the sanity of the subject.
5. That suggestion is quite distinct from either Hypnotism or

Mesmerism, though persons not in a normal state (that of health) are more susceptible to it; the power of suggestion lying entirely in the *thought* of the operator, and is effective in proportion to its clearness, and which acts upon the subject in the manner sketched.

6. The value of the *study* of Hypnotism and Mesmerism (*not* of experimenting therein) in pointing the way to a portion of the constitution of man which is not yet recognized by (so-called) Western science.

7. The value of this study in showing the *necessity* of gaining control of our mind and organism generally, and the supreme importance of the practice of those ethical rules which have been given to the world from time to time by the Masters of Humanity.

And just a few words to those who would go more deeply into the realm of the Occult—for most people so full of a mysterious attraction. Some come to Theosophy having read of "Occultism," fancying they can become fully-fledged magicians in a short space of time. But the Theosophist's conception of Occultism is very different from this. H. P. B. says (*Lucifer*—April, '88.): "Occultism is not magic. It is *comparatively* easy to learn the trick of spells and the methods of using the subtler, but still material, forces of physical nature; the powers of the animal soul in man are soon awakened; the forces which his love, his hate, his passion, can call into operation, are readily developed. But this is Black Magic—*Sorcery*. For it is the motive, and *the motive alone*, which makes any exercise of power become black (malignant) or white (beneficent) Magic. It is impossible to employ *spiritual* forces, if there is the slightest tinge of selfishness remaining in the operator. For unless the intention is entirely unalloyed, the spiritual will transform itself into the psychic, act on the astral plane, and dire results may be produced by it. The powers and forces of animal nature can equally be used by the selfish and revengeful, as by the unselfish and the all-forgiving; the powers and forces of spirit lend themselves only to the perfectly pure in heart—and this is DIVINE MAGIC."

In the light of this, where is the morbid craving for the mysterious? Where the unhealthy attraction towards the occult? Theosophy goes far more deeply into the hidden side of Nature than the petty occult arts for which some long so much. These

deal for the most part with what we know as the astral region, "the Psychic World of supersensuous perceptions and deceptive sights." Let those who are wishing to gain occult powers, become clairvoyant, and be generally "mysterious," listen to these words from the "Voice of the Silence":

"The name of Hall the second is the Hall of Learning (the Astral World). In it thy soul will find the blossoms of life, but under every flower a serpent coiled. * * * If thou wouldst cross the second safely, stop not the fragrance of its stupefying blossoms to inhale. * * * The Hall is dangerous in its perfidious beauty—is needed but for thy probation. Beware, Lanoo, lest dazzled by illusive radiance thy soul should linger and be caught in its deceptive light. * * * That light shines from the jewel of the Great Ensnaer, Mara (men's vices). The senses it bewitches, blinds the mind, and leaves the unwary an abandoned wreck. * * * Beware, disciple, of that lethal shade. No light that shines from spirit can dispel the darkness of the nether soul, unless all selfish thought has fled therefrom."

These are Golden Precepts, indeed, for those who can appreciate them and who know some little of the deception and danger of the astral world. For those who enter it for other purposes than that of gaining Wisdom the novelty and glamour hide the terrible legend over its portals—

"All hope abandon, ye who enter here."

Yes, it is comparatively easy to gain the lower occult powers—it needs but patience and a determined will to cultivate the "evil eye," to evoke the so-called "spirit" of a dead or living person, to be a hypnotist, and generally play with the weaknesses of our fellow men and women; but the magician must be wary and his will firm, for if his evil thoughts do not effect their purpose they will rebound upon himself. H. P. B. defines Sorcery as "any kind of evil influence exercised upon other persons, who suffer, or make other persons suffer, in consequence"—and what worse sorcery than an evil thought?

Let those pause who would go into the occult from curiosity or sheer love of mystery—it is scarcely possible for such to enter the astral world safely; and it is still worse if they force a mesmeric subject into the danger they dare not face themselves. This as-

tral world contains the blossoms of life," but the Wise Ones stop not to inhale their fragrance—"the Wise Ones tarry not in pleasure-grounds of senses; they heed not the sweet-tongued voices of illusion"—but with eyes ever seeking to discern the Real beneath the Apparent, they pass safely through that realm of glamour and enchantment, bringing with them, as the fruits of their journey, that perfect jewel—the pearl beyond price—DIVINE WISDOM.

HERBERT KITCHEN,

[The above paper was given to the Johannesburg Theosophical Group, and the substance of it to the Leeds and Bradford Lodges.]

WILL.

"It is not the weak wing but the passionless heart that prevents us from reaching the sun."
—Persian.

It is a conceded fact that next to reason the most important element in human character is Will-power.

The teacher, the reformer, the physician, the pidge agree that disorderly will-force and weak will-force cause the majority of the moral and mental failures that make of human life such a sad problem.

To the disciple of Theosophia, trained will-force is an essential factor, without which naught can be achieved; for the vast horizons of spiritual consciousness may be seen only from levels so far above the path of everyday life that none can reach them save by persistent and intense will.

What is the nature of this element, or quality, that we term will? Of what, in what, consists the force of will? These questions are vital to all; for the nature of will and its place in Man's nature should form the essential study in the curriculum of self-knowledge and self-training. Formerly, we used to think of light, color, sound, of solid, of liquid, as certain somethings in themselves. Science now proves these phenomena to be the result of atomic motion, of etheric vibrations. The ethers themselves being differentiations of primordial substance resulting from differences in the rate, combination, and direction of vibratory motion. We know that the human organism is a combination of atoms, of

ethers, all vibrating in different modes, at different rates and intensities. May it not, then, be reasonable to suppose that the force called Will is not a simple something but a complex element, so to speak, resulting from the synchronous movement of all the forces of the human organism, in one certain direction. All the lives, all the atoms of mind and body, march simultaneously on one certain point or object. This simultaneous movement may be an impetuous charge, sweeping all before it, or a steady, persistent advance; or a dogged resistance, overcoming because it cannot be defeated. Whatever its mode, one thing is obvious, viz., that strong will appears to be the concentrated movement of the desires, emotions, thoughts, and physical acts of an individual. The point or object upon which this movement centers may be either good or evil, either a sensual desire or a heroic sacrifice, a cruel injustice or a beneficent act, a caprice or a noble ambition; whatsoever its nature, the force which conquers this object, that which obtains in spite of resistance, is will-power. Will, or focused vibration, is neither good nor evil, *per se*. It is the elements vibrating that give to the motion its peculiar character, either destructive or constructive. Just as weight is the attraction of the earth multiplied by every molecule in the human body; so Will is rate of motion multiplied by every atom of the soul. Now, if this theory of Will be in any way correct, it follows that there must be two great divisions into which all the Will armies may be classed. First, the division in which every unit is a voluntary servitor and actor. Second, when any units are forced into concord of movement by some stronger element of character. The first is the one-pointed harmonious force of the real, true Adept. It is the will of achievement that compels success. It is the perfect expression of Will. The second is the force of repression; it is self-control, and though of great value, yet it cannot, by any means, be the highest form of Will. Very often the coerced elements rise in rebellion against the compelling leader and tumult reigns. Such rebellion is impossible when the will of the general is the will of every unit.

The student of Theosophy knows well the different principles, or elements of action, that function in each one of us. Each element or principle, is, in a sense, a world of itself, with myriads of

subjects; the rulers among these principles, the generals of these vast armies of the seven-fold human being, are desire, reason, and spiritual intuition—Kama-Manas, Lower Manas, Buddhi-Manas—the latter manifesting ordinarily as conscience, the voice within. Frequently these leaders are opposed to one another. They battle for supremacy, as many of us know full well. Their movements are discordant instead of concordant; the lines of their armies are out of step. Hence, the first lesson in force-training is to bring the leaders into accord, the armies into rhythmical march, lovingly obedient to the general. It occurs frequently, that an individual desires greatly an object; reason and conscience move in the same direction, but the physical body refuses to obey; it will not move obediently to the command of the leaders. Desire impels, reason directs, conscience approves, but the body remains inert. Why? Because the physical body is made up of lives, myriads of lives, each one possessed of consciousness, of memory, of will, and these lives are combined into one organism by the One Life. These lives, or entities, have to be trained, educated, ensouled by the Soul, and the Soul does this work through its habit of thought. By this means the physical lives learn to enter into line and become loving, obedient soldiers in Arjuna's army.

Now, if will-force be the synchronous movement of the functioning principles and the atoms forming their elements, it will be readily seen that difference in rate of motion, in direction of motion, the pitch, the quality of tone, so to speak, of these different factors will affect the force of will in any given individual. Is such a difference possible? Let us consider the question:

The seven principles, so familiar to the student, belong to the Microcosm and may be styled microcosmic elements of action. These elements of action are related to macrocosmic principles, which may be styled elements of condition, and these are known to the student as Tatwas, or Finer Forces of Nature. These Tatwas, or at least four of them, form the base of the well-known elements, earth, air, fire, water; and we shall soon have to add ether—Akasa Tatwa. Each Tatwa or macrocosmic element has its own rate of vibratory motion, its own line of direction, its own peculiar quality or color; and each one is, in a sense, a sphere or

plane in which the principles of action may function. The science of Astrology shows that the principles constituting the human being may belong to different Tatwas. Here, then, appears a basic difference in the quality and intensity of the microcosmic forces. This difference certainly appears reasonable; for in our state of complex differentiation one of the principles may have evolved to a much higher plane than the others. (The word "higher" is here used to express rate of vibration, and not a better condition.) Now, if the Tatwic conditions neutralize each other as air and earth, or antagonize each other as fire and earth, the principles functioning in those Tatwic states would have difficulty in acting together. Take, for example, a case in which the reasoning principle is of water, the desire or kamic principle of earth, and the other principles of air and fire; what power would the controlling and impelling leaders have to marshal the forces of the organism? Or, take a case on the physical plane altogether. Let us suppose that the lives composing the body belong to the fire element, or Tejas Tatwa, while the co-ordinating One Life functions in a low condition of the earth (or Prithivi) element, the lives would have more intensity, more power than the Life and would overcome it. We know that this One Life is often inadequate to keep in harmonious subordination these myriad lives; then sickness, often death, results, unless some higher principle asserts its sway. And, to-day, this higher principle must be taken into account. The hidden Light makes itself felt. In many souls it is triple; and as intellectual reason, with its strong, steady purpose, is far above desire, with its capricious impulses, so, grandly superior to intellectual reason, rises the Self, the *true Self*—the spiritual man, all-knowing, all-loving. The will of this true Self is Spiritual Will, or that force which compels all, not tyrannically, but through wisdom. "In that name all may be achieved; before that name *all things shall bow*, all things on the earth, under the earth, or above the earth." Through the power of the Spiritual Will, the different elements of the complex organism of man may be harmonized and their contrary movements brought into co-ordinate movements. In this way differences may be made helps rather than hindrances. Seek the Higher Self. Let Him be the General, and lo, order will appear; and the armies of body, mind and soul march as a unit on to the victory of attainment.

The degree of harmony between desire, reason and Spirit measures the extent of choice in the individual; and their combined energy and steadiness of movement gauge its power. If desire be the leader the power of choice is very small and its power is fitful. Reason greatly extends the power of choice and gives steady purpose to will-force. The Spiritual condition is free. The Will of the Higher Self is supreme in our world. The great purpose of spiritual training and culture is to evolve from human will to Spiritual will; then the living Hosts, forming the Microcosm Man, will, under Krishna's guidance, move and vibrate in time, in step, in line, with Cosmic Will.

And is not Cosmic Will itself the motion of the Great Breath pulsing outwards in the evolution of manifested worlds? "Desire first arose in It," and Desire projected became Cosmic vibration and motion—*i. e.*, Will.

M. A. W.

BEHIND THE VEIL.

A DEPARTMENT FOR THE INVESTIGATION BY THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY OF PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES RELATING TO THE PSYCHIC LIFE.

Experiences and explanation of experiences are invited, but all personal or irrelevant detail will be omitted.

IT IS a sad yet very certain fact that we live on the outside of our being, on the uttermost rung of the "arc of descent." Real Being, the substratum of consciousness or that central sun from whence our finite being evolves and around which revolves our personality is an unknown region farther away from our everyday consciousness than the Pole Star from our planet. We live exiles from our true home, strangers to our true Self.

This outer world is the sphere of whirlwind and storm. The dwellers thereof suffer from the tempests of passion, from the fierce battle of wild desires, of antagonistic magnetisms, just as the dwellers on the surface of the globe suffer from conflicting elements, from heat, cold and darkness. "And he shall be cast into outer darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The mind of the dweller on this outer surface is in itself a whirl. Unable to see beyond this little ring of material life, it knows not whence it cometh nor whither it goeth. It whirls round and round,

ever seeking a source and a goal; but as it moves ever round the surface and not centerwards, it finds not the object of its search. All seems fitful change or darkling whirl. Yet, all the while, the center remains at rest. To the center of being, of consciousness, no storms ever come, nor any darkness. There the light shines always. The center is the source and the goal, the beginning and the end. Although the center is the point whence all motion proceeds, itself it is not moved. From this supreme position all arcs of outlying circles may be seen and measured. The many radii tending apparently in as many directions all differing one from the other, yea, sometimes opposed one to the other, emanate one and all from this center. Circumferential spheres are but a throwing out of the wonderful life of that center. There dwelleth the Higher Self, the Watcher, the Self that is the many selves.

Whoever desires peace, knowledge, wisdom, attainment, bliss, should direct every energy to reach the center. The burden of the "Upanishads," of "the Bhagavad Gita" is "Find the center; seek the light within which leadeth to the Central Sun."

Initiates and mystics of every age have taught the same mystery. The way to the center is long and toilsome; the soul must retire inwards from vesture to vesture, from outer consciousness to the inner, aye, to the inmost consciousness. Often, a way station is mistaken for the center; and the soul awakens from its delusion to find herself back again in the outer whirl of darkness. But the light ever shines, a guide ever waits, a voice from out of the Silence ever calls, and the soul who earnestly seeks, who faithfully trusts, who attentively listens will find the way to the center and reach its bliss in spite of all obstacles.

The mystic book "Etidorhpa" describes this journey in a vivid allegory of a man being led by occult guides to the center of the earth, where he finds in the realm of Etidorhpa (divine harmony expressing itself in love and compassion) the Mystic Brotherhood, the guides and guardians of the human race.

Reasoning from analogy, should not the home of the "Masters of Compassion" be in the center? The S. D. Vol., I, page 166, old edition, gives an extract from an "*Authoritative Letter*" which

speaks of the seven globes as being one. "In short, as globes, they are in *co-adunition* but not in *consubstantiality with our earth* and thus pertain to quite another state of consciousness." May not these seven globes interpenetrate, so to speak, interblend, forming to our senses one globe? This surface of the earth which appears to us so densely solid is only so to our sense consciousness. In reality, it is a thin porous film floating here and there upon the sphere of force which forms our planet. And that sphere of force is manifold; the innermost interpenetrating all the others, yet intangible to all consciousness save that of its own kind; and near that central sphere must be the home of the Blessed Ones. As we approach our center we come in touch with them.

This suggestion may seem a wild speculation, almost a vagary, but without speculation, who can know? He must dare, who would the Veil of Isis lift.

MARA.

PRACTICAL THEOSOPHY.

THIS DEPARTMENT IS INTENDED TO BE ONE OF ACTUAL EXPERIENCE. ANY ITEMS SHOWING THE AID THEOSOPHY GIVES IN DAILY LIFE WILL BE WELCOME.

Knowledge, no matter how rare, is of little benefit unless it be applied to the needs of life—the soul's life. The simplest act, the most fleeting thought, comes under some one of Nature's laws; therefore, there is no act so trivial, no thought so puerile that knowledge of those laws may not apply to it. There is too great a tendency to relegate knowledge and philosophy to moments of leisure and aspiration, but both should form part of our every-day life, no matter how prosy, how insignificant its occupations may seem to be. Just as knowledge, applied to commercial and external life, has brought much comfort and leisure into life, and extended its horizons, so knowledge, applied to soul-life, to thought-life, brings happiness, improvement, and greatly extended vistas of undreamed of possibilities.

Let us take the knowledge that we have of the law of action and reaction. We know the up and down of it; we know that action produces reaction, and then reaction becomes action, and so on, as the pendulum of life swings throughout time; yet, when the sad reaction comes, when, after an uplift into sunlit skies, we

feel ourselves swinging back into the darkness, we are apt to sigh, "Alas, what a Karma is mine!" We fail to apply the knowledge we have that these ups and downs are the natural order, that there is nothing special or personal about them. They are not in reality up or down, nor backward nor forward; they are only curves of the soul's spiral progression. Since, then, these alternations of activity and repose, of sorrow and joy, of strength and weakness, are the results of a natural law, and outside the "Place of Peace," a universal law, we can apply its workings to soul-development—and soul-development means happiness. There is a positive good in every curve, whether it seems to lead into the depths or on to the heights. Does not the night bring blessing and growth? A realization that these changes are the result of a flaw and not a punishment, will help us to overcome.

The artistic and emotional temperaments are far more susceptible than others to these ups and downs—for these temperaments belong, one to the airy, the other to the watery element, and therefore they feel more the winds and tides produced by the swift motion round these spiral curves. But this very sensitiveness is a strength if rightly trained.

Nature does not work in straight lines, and when the intellectual will blindly attempt to do so, disaster follows. How many marriages have been rendered unhappy, how many friendships destroyed, how many bright intellects destroyed, lives wrecked, and souls tortured with despair through lack of applying this knowledge of the law of action and reaction to daily life. My friend grows indifferent, I know not why. Shall I feel hurt or angry? No, it is merely an ebb-tide; I will wait lovingly, patiently, for the returning water. My work becomes hateful, or restlessness takes hold of me. Shall I rebel, or rush into new fields? No, the feeling will pass away. A change of thought will suffice. Have brain and nerves been in a state of tension? Then a little foolishness is a good medicine. Has life lost its brightness, and does my soul seem to retrograde into gloom, into the mire—shall I despair? No, welcome the darkness, welcome the desert, or the swamp, 'tis but for a brief while. I am passing thro' a valley to reach the next high level. After the depths, the heights, after the night cometh the day; such is the law.

MARA.

AROUND THE ZODIAC.

From Feb. 21st to Mar. 22nd the sun is said to be in the sign of Pisces, the Fish. This sign symbolizes the SEA—either the tumultuous sea of passion or ignorance, or the deeps of pure Knowledge. It marks the end of the cycle, when the soul rests, before beginning a new period of activity either as a Christ or as a Demon. Pisces also represents the dissolution of the earth—Pralaya. Vishnu incarnated in the form of a fish to save Manu and the Veds from the Deluge. Christ was represented under this form in the early Christian symbology. The apostles were fishermen. Its gem is the Chrysolite; its plants, ferns, mosses and sea-weed. It rules coral and sand. In the human body it governs the feet. It is the nighthouse of Jupiter.

Out of mud springs the Lotus flower; out of clay, gold, and many precious things; out of oysters, the pearl; brightest silks to robe forms are spun by a worm; from a stick is born flame, from the jungle comes the sweetest honey; so from sources of little worth come the precious things of earth. —*Singhalese.*

As there is no screen or ceiling between our heads and the infinite heavens, so is there no bar or wall in the soul where man, the effect ceases, and God, the cause, begins. We lie open on one side to the deeps of spiritual nature, to the attributes of God.

—*Emerson.*

Fear not the dark, friend; perchance the Water of Life may be found in the dark abyss of sorrow. Let not thy gloom end in despair; for the night is pregnant with the day. —*Persian.*

Some thoughts always find us young, and keep us so. Such a thought is the love of the universal and eternal beauty.

—*Emerson.*

“What is the use of all learning, if it does not lead one to the feet of the Supreme Intelligence.” —*Thiravallaver.*

“When does a man get his salvation? When his egoism dies.” —*Sri Ramakrishna.*

Just over the border which lies between
 The life which we feel and know
 And that which no earth-blind eyes have seen,
 Is a place where all souls must go ;
 Where strange things happen and visions come,
 And life like a fancy seems,
 As far and faint as a wild bee's hum,—
 'Tis the wonderful Land of Dreams.

There joys too pure for this baser earth
 Lie waiting for eager hearts,
 And loves which died in their very birth
 Grow near as the world departs ;
 There vanished faces look forth and smile,
 And many a lost hope gleams,
 And buried thoughts live a sweet, short while,—
 In the wonderful Land of Dreams.

There sorrows shirked must be borne anew,
 And many a heart must ache ;
 But how sweet is the land where all dreams are true,
 The world which each soul must make !
 Glad Life and Death in its bounds are one,
 Each fed by its varying streams,
 And all return, when their days have gone—
 To the wonderful Land of Dreams.

ETHEL MAUDE COLSEN,

In "The Story of a Dream." By permission.

T. S. ECHOES.

Our Twentieth Anniversary.

ADYAR, MADRAS, Jan. 1, 1896.

The annual reunion of the Theosophical Society held at the Adyar Headquarters on the 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th of December, 1895, was characterized by a spirit of harmony ; an extremely cordial and brotherly feeling being manifest ; the causes of the discord of the past few years having been swept away. There was a large attendance of delegates and members, and the crowds who flocked to hear Mrs. Besant's daily morning lectures, which were masterly outpourings of sublime thought, moulded in elegant diction, did not seem to be in the least diminished by the rain of the last two days of the session. A notable feature of the convention was the presence of seven Americans representing the States of Michigan, Ken-

tucky, New York and Vermont. The public meeting at Victoria Hall, Madras, on the evening of the 29th, commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Theosophical Society, was crowded to overflowing, notwithstanding the downpour of rain. Our revered President-Founder, who continues to receive so many expressions of profound gratitude and unchanging confidence occupied the chair, and short addresses were made by O. L. Sarma of Southern India. E. S. Grece, an American lawyer, Bertram Keightley, M. A., General Secretary of the Indian Section, and the Chairman. All the addresses were heartily applauded. But the chief speaker of the evening was Mrs. Annie Besant. The immense audience gave her a most enthusiastic greeting as she stepped upon the platform, listened with profound attention to her soul-stirring presentation of Theosophical truths, and, at the close of her remarks, testified their approval by storms of long continued applause. Mrs. Besant held conversaziones twice daily, and it was with exceeding interest that the audiences listened to her ready elucidation of most puzzling questions. The business transactions of the Society went on smoothly. A revision of the European Section Committee's draft of proposed amendments to the Society's rules was referred to a special committee and their report unanimously adopted by the convention. As the members separated for their several homes, all seemed to feel that they had been benefited by this fraternal exchange of thought, and by the uplifting power of the noble utterances which flowed from the lips of Mrs. Besant. Her four morning lectures are to be published in book form, so that the public may have an opportunity of sharing in the exceptionally valuable instructions which they contain.

W. A. E.

London Letter.

January 17th, 1896.

Dear Editor :—It being necessary for this letter to catch the out-going mail to-morrow, will just prevent my being able to send you early news of the proceedings at the recent Indian Convention. I can, however, give you some extracts from the letter received here last mail from Mrs. Besant and dated Adyar, Dec. 25th. On arriving at Bombay on Dec. 21st, Mrs. Besant was met by Mr. Bertram Keightley and Babu Upendranath Basu (assistant secretary of India Section) who went out to the steamer; on the pier was a crowd of Bombay friends "all smiles and flowers." A meeting was held at 6 P. M., in the Society's rooms at which Mrs. Besant spoke, and at 9:30 she went on to Madras accompanied by eight members. The President was waiting at Madras to escort Mrs. Besant out to Adyar. The letter goes on, "The programme for the next few days is full. I lecture on the 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th, the days of the anniversary, meet-

ing and convention. On these same days we have conversations to which any may come, and every evening throughout my stay there is a gathering for questions restricted to members. * * * Dr. English (who has been editing *The Theosophist* while the President was away) has decided to remain permanently at Adyar with his daughter." This is a most satisfactory arrangement as Dr. English is a highly cultivated man whose literary help will be of the greatest value. The President is very pleased to have his friend, of many years standing, with him. Mrs. Besant left Adyar on the 2nd of January to go North, but will return before leaving for England to spend a fortnight, paying visits in the Madras district with the President. Mrs. Besant will probably sail from Colombo on her return to England, March 26th. Mr. Bertram Keightley left Bombay on Jan. 4th, and will arrive in London in a few days.

A new Lodge has been formed at Toulon, in France, under the Presidency of Dr. Pascal. It will be called the Lotus Bleu Lodge.

From Holland comes the news of increased activity. The members have, in addition to their regular meetings in Amsterdam, taken two large rooms at the Hague, where meetings are held on alternate Sundays. The President of the Holland Branch was invited to give a lecture on Theosophy, by the Society of Freethinkers, called "The Daybreak." The attendance was good and the lecture was followed by an open debate, which lasted until a late hour. Some of the Dutch members in Java have succeeded in interesting an inland chief of high birth, in Theosophy, who has offered to contribute to the cost of a translation of the Theosophic books into the Malay language.

In England there is active work in the Hull Centre, where the members have now a good library and have regular meetings for study.

The Sheffield Centre has also organized regular meetings for study, and four public meetings have been held on the Sundays in December. The attendance was very good.

Mr. Mead's translation of the Gnostic Gospel *Pistis Sophia* is finished and is now in the hands of the printer. Mrs. Besant is engaged on a new manual to be entitled "Man and His Bodies;" and Mr. C. W. Leadbeater is writing another on "Devachan."

Fraternally,

L. M. COOPER.

TO EDITOR OF MERCURY:

Dear Sir:—As I have received numerous letters and all the papers from Australia telling of the extraordinarily successful work of the Countess Wachtmeister in that country, also many inquiries from our American brothers and sisters in regard to the Countess' health and doings, and knowing that your many readers are interested in the work of this ardent,

noble, selfless worker, I beg that you will graciously grant me space in your magazine for a brief *resume* of the work in Australia.

I would like to give the good news as a New Year's greeting, with the earnest hope that each one of us may continue the good fight and be enthused with the right enthusiasm.

After her successful tour throughout America—a tour of over five months—the Countess left New York on the 26th of Sept. (1894) for India, via Europe. She visited Branches and lectured throughout the different countries; arriving in India in Dec., and left Madras (India) for Australia in the early part of April and landed in Melbourne on the 24th of that month. Ever since the Countess put foot on Australian soil she has been hard at work—"working morning, afternoon and night"—giving lectures, attending Lodge meetings, holding classes, and question meetings, forming and inaugurating Branches, giving drawing-room lectures, going to the "At Homes," to talk Theosophy to upper tendom. Thus the Countess has spread Theosophy amongst all classes.

The great success attending her efforts, the numerous demands for Theosophy, more than anyone dared anticipate, have obliged her to lengthen her stay in every town. Melbourne could not "lose and let her go," for ever so long. Sydney proved no less exacting. And what more? "In consequence of the great success of the Countess Wachtmeister's lectures in Sydney, it was decided, without asking her consent, that she should visit the towns in New South Wales and Queensland, that had not yet heard the teachings and high ideals of Theosophy publicly presented."

On the 24th of Sept., the Countess commenced these visits—between two and three dozen towns. The tour was expected to require about six weeks—with lectures every day—but these "towns" simply followed the "cities" example, *viz.*, they insisted on the Countess remaining with them longer, and, as usual, the amiable, selfless worker granted the favor willingly. She loves to work and help others! While on that tour, the Countess had to take a few days rest on account of her health breaking down. Was it to be wondered at? Her eyes became inflamed and she was forbidden to read or write. Last month she was better, though not fully restored. Besides all other work, the Countess has a very large correspondence to attend to. "How she can perform all her work is a marvel to all." Indeed it is! One of the Brisbane papers says: "The Countess Wachtmeister created a profound impression amongst the thinking portion of our community * * She delivered a series of five lectures in the Queensland Metropolis * * The lectures were well attended and were the subject afterwards of much comment."

"The Daily Telegraph" of Sydney says: "The Countess is a woman of impressive presence and is gifted with elocutionary powers of high order;

her ideas are conveyed in the simplest possible language. She has the power to arrest and keep the attention of her hearers in the most remarkable manner. From the opening to the closing sentence the lecture was followed with the keenest possible interest. Those who might be inclined to doubt the efficacy of Theosophy—to question the advantage claimed for it—must have found their prejudices slowly dissolving under the spell of so earnest and cultured an advocate,” etc. Melbourne, as well as other city papers, also spoke in the highest terms of her lectures.

As a consequence of the great demand for the Countess’ presence in Australia her trip to us had to be postponed. She cannot possibly leave there before next June. So let us “possess our souls in patience” and not grudge our brethren their opportunities, but rejoice that people’s minds are awakening to receive the truth! Above all, let us do the nearest duty at once and not fold our hands waiting for some one to do it for us! If each one will earnestly do his or her share of the labor all will be well!

Evidently the Australians, like the Americans, belong to the new race, for the Countess, in regard to them, says: “How many there are in this country who possess abnormal gifts, persons who have had strange experiences which often they have not dared to relate for fear of being ridiculed, and yet in their secret hearts desiring ardently to obtain some explanation of these curious occurrences, which they know themselves to be true, however impossible they may seem to others.”

When Countess Wachtmeister completes her tour of Australia she will proceed to Tasmania; from there she goes to New Zealand then comes to America, stopping en route at the Hawaiian Islands.

Ceylon Letter.

From our own Correspondent.

Before this is in the hands of your readers the Adyar Convention will be over. During its session Mrs. Besant will deliver four (free) lectures on the “Fame That Awaits Us.”

The readers of MERCURY will be glad to hear that Mrs. Higgins is now able to offer her small band of girls of the Musaeus School and Orphanage, better and more solid accommodations than what they had before in the palm leaf house. Struggling amidst all manner of troubles, this noble souled lady is accomplishing a very praiseworthy work for humanity. She needs help, and it is hoped that all who can afford to give something will do so.

We have in Ceylon a small group of Theosophists in the Hope Lodge. They meet twice a week at the Musaeus School or Orphanage and devote a couple of hours to the earnest study of Theosophy. They all send the MERCURY and its readers best wishes and greetings for the New Year.

December, 1895.

A.

Extract from Letter from Rome, Italy.

Self-possession means to get possession of your own Self—to attain interior balance—by withdrawing the consciousness within yourself, if only for a moment, each day. A valuable hint is “to think yourself into the inside of your own head”; that is to compel yourself to consider the head the boundary of all things, and then calmly look to see what is in this hollow sphere. The way to go in is by shutting off touch, (by lying at ease) sight, taste and smell, and lastly, hearing, the latter aided by a quiet place. The best time is the first waking moment, and the mind should be occupied with your own ideal of the Centre, either as a sound, a word, or a conception of Christ. This Centre is always the Christ in us, no matter what symbol images our idea of the Truth.

[This is a practical way of becoming conscious in the Higher Manas, and the illumination which will result in time would come, because the best definition of Manas is that it is a centre of consciousness in Buddhi—the Universal Truth.]

The time of new revelation has arrived, the revelation of the spiritual meaning of the Scriptures through the Thought sphere, or intellectual worshipers of the Lord. This “second coming of our Lord in clouds and great glory” is witnessed by the “clouds” of astral witnesses, which is the highest purport and use of Spiritualism, and the “glory” of direct cognition of Deity by the mytics. It will not be limited to one person; it will be, or, rather is, multiple. Each approaches the Central Light from a different starting-point, and receives the rays that touch that individual soul. It is only by uniting our perceptions of the Light that we can obtain complete knowledge of the One Law.

There is no Religion Higher Than Truth.

The Chicago F. T. S. have organized an “Extension Center of Theosophy,” a most happy inspiration. They have issued the appended open letter which we hope will find an echo in the heart of all our readers.

The “Extension Center of Theosophy” has been organized to render active aid to the great spiritual movement implied by that name, whose Parent Society is in India, under Col. H. S. Olcott, and whose Sections now spread over the entire civilized world.

Greeting from It to all who stood so loyally for those ancient principles of Truth embodied in its teachings, and for freedom from entanglement !
Salutation and cheer to them from this Center, which aims to be a verita-

ble nucleus of force and fire to aid all true workers in bringing to light the forgotten ideals of our Aryan ancestors!

What can you do for the Great Cause? Think, and think deeply, under the light of the "Shining Self," and if you have suggestions, if you have aid, if you have words of sympathy and help, put your self in correspondence with us.

Whom do you know in your vicinity willing to unite with you or be one of a group to arrange for meetings or assist in any other way in the circulation of this spiritual current of thought-force?

Or, would a speaker sent to you be able to draw even a parlor audience on the great subjects of "Reincarnation," "The Laws of Karma," "The Sheaths of the Soul" and kindred themes? If so, let us hear from you, and a further list will be sent you.

Or, would a class, conducted by correspondence on the Chatauqua plan, be practicable in your neighborhood?—this plan to consist of printed instructions, sent in monthly leaflets, giving questions and suggestions for books of reference. The object sought is to get *en rapport* with as many points as possible, in order that centers of real spiritual activity may be set up therein, for the uplifting of humanity and to be prepared for the coming Cycle, now so nearly upon us, at the beginning of the next century.

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A delightful Chicago activity is a private class of six members who are taking lessons in Oratory. The teacher, Mrs. Laura J. Tisdale, one of the best known Delsarte teachers in the Northwest, is a Theosophist of many years' zeal. They seek to acquire grace and freedom in the exposition of ideas, believing that every talent of body as well as soul should serve the great Cause.

The tongue is the key of the treasury of wisdom; when the door is shut, who can discover whether a man deals in jewels or small ware.

—*Persian.*

BOOK REVIEWS.

THE GOSPEL OF BUDDHA. Told by Paul Carus. Third Edition. Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago.

The success of this popular compilation of the theories and incidents of Buddha's ministry, based on critical works by modern writers and on direct translations of oriental texts is evident from the need of a third edition. This appreciation is justly deserved by the painstaking, analytical grouping of companion facts of Gautama's life, and aspects of his teaching, by the gathering together of many beautiful parables, by the valuable glossary and reference notes, and by the comparisons with Christian texts. All these are excellent, but the greatest success is the well-drawn and consistent character of the Buddha himself, as he walked through the mango-groves of India begging alms and uttering his exalted ethical teaching, always noble and dignified, and full of exquisite compassion for the darkened souls of humanity.

On the other hand, the book reveals two faults. One is the lack of spiritual fervor, and the flatness of the literary style shorn of the glowing oriental metaphors with which a Buddhist would have presented his religion. The author states in the preface "he only pruned the exuberance of wonder which delights in relating the most incredible things," but this only shows that the coldly critical mind of a nineteenth century philosopher may not be the uttermost standard to gauge a world-scripture, especially if incredibility takes the place of understanding; for "miracles" either represent qualities of the Blessed One veiled in allegorical, or mystery, language, or else they demonstrate control of nature-forces by laws unknown to the limitations of material science.

The second error is caused by the attempt to render in ordinary words the technical Sanscrit terms relating to the various faculties or principles of Man. The metaphysical doctrines of Buddha are very valuable, and form the one point of superiority over Christianity as the ethical teachings of each coincide perfectly. By popularizing this soul-science, it has become somewhat confusing for an exact student, especially if he is searching for the One Truth revealed by all religions. In spite of these lacks the "Gospel" is interesting to read, and elevating to ponder on in thought. Its noble purpose is to spread information that will compel respect and love for the religion of millions of our Eastern brethren, and our sympathy in the prayer:—

"Comfort, O holy Teacher, compassionate and all-loving, the afflicted and the sorrow-laden, illumine those who go astray, and let us all gain more and more in comprehension and in holiness."

E. S.

THE EXODUS. The Gestefeld Lib. and Pub. Co., New York City. \$1.00 per year. Subscriptions taken by MERCURY and Chicago Headquarters.

This is a fourteen page pamphlet edited by Mrs. Ursula N. Gestefeld, and consists of consecutive teachings from month to month on the Science of Being. It is really Theosophy as contained in the Bible, and applied to daily life.

"Still Higher Criticism" unveils the esoteric and spiritual meaning of the Scriptures. Mrs. Gestefeld writes: "The Old Testament is a symbolical presentation of principles true in themselves, therefore, old. The New Testament illustrates their recognition and application by ourselves—the new to us." Genesis, the "boney structure of the Bible," presents these principles in an orderly ratio and is the key to the right understanding of the entire book. Taking the first four words as the most important, she says: "The beginning, God, is always impersonal. It is the uncreate, eternal Principle of all things. The One is expressed and manifested as Creator. Its action is creating." This idea of God is the same as Parabrahman, of which the first film of differentiation is Mulaprakriti or Substance. So the author writes, "In the beginning, God, the changeless Principle, is the eternal Substance which, by its action or operation, brings forth what is involved in it."

The creation of the heaven and the earth she interprets thus: "The 'heaven' signifies the expression of God—the indivisible, subsistent Unit. The 'earth' signifies the manifestation. Both are with 'the beginning, God.' Both expression and manifestation are potential with Principle, which by its operation, or action, brings them forth, and in their necessary order." The second verse, "The Spirit of God moved," is regarded as abstract action, or motion, preceding the results, the days of orderly sequence. Thus "Substance and Motion, their unity as 'the beginning' is presented in the opening of this chapter, what modern scientists have proved to be a fundamental necessity." This Primal Energy is the power called Fohat in the "Secret Doctrine."

The phase, "and God said," is mystically the utterance of the Absolute Mind. In the first twenty-seven verses, the numerous repetitions of the conjunction "and" illustrate the principle of continuity connecting the six days of creation which are "indissolubly related to each other as degrees of expression of their subsistent Principle, and as indissolubly related to it, through the ceaseless action of that First Cause." Prof. Drummond proclaims this law of continuity in the growth of organic structure. So occultism teaches that all the principles of man and the Cosmos interpenetrate each other, that Prana circulates through them all, and "from Atma this Prana is born."

The logical continuity of these different stages, or days, result in a com-

posite whole, the "Image of God." This is defined as "the ego of the human species. It is the expression of God, and, as generic man, the germs from which develop all species. Man, as this unit of expression of God, not *a* being, but Being, possesses potentially all the natures and powers which the nature of his Cause logically compells." This "Ego of the species" is Atma, permeating all individual souls with its essence, yet in its own nature impersonal, the Universal Self of all, the Image of God overshadowing humanity.

In considering the days of creation, Light is the power to Know, the greatest; the power to Understand is the firmament which divides the lesser faculties from the greatest; the power of Insight, and the power to weigh and measure all things, or the Intellect, belong to the Ego." This suggests an interesting analogy in Genesis to the human principles, Light being Buddhi, the boundless ocean of Absolute Knowledge; and the firmament illustrating the dual nature of Manas; the terms of Understanding for the Higher and Intellect for the Lower Manas, are excellent.

I have sketched the Biblical study which has appeared in the four numbers of Exodus already issued, to stimulate students to preach the truths of Theosophy through an Esoteric Christianity. Hearts will open more quickly to the reception of Spiritual Light and the perception of impersonal Law as an interpretation of the hallowed words of life-long religious thought, than to the same ideas garbed in Sanscrit terms and founded on the unknown Vedas and Upanishads.

Exodus also offers a symbolical explanation of the International Bible Lessons, which are very helpful to a Christian Theosophist. The personalities of old Scriptural heroes are robed in living truth as powers and activities of the soul of man. The "Mastery of Fate" gives practical instructions to the awakened soul how to develop its power to recognize the nature of its true spiritual being—the Image God.

January 28th, 1896.

E. S.

THE STORY OF A DREAM. By Ethel Maude Colsen. Kerr and Co. For sale by MERCURY, Chicago and San Francisco.

The Chicago Branch is proud of enrolling in its membership the author-ess of this interesting romance, based on occult laws.

The story illustrates the facts of Karma and Reincarnation, the chapters telling of modern love and thought, alternating with dreams of a corresponding past, when, in ancient Assyria, these three egos loved yet would not grant the sacrifices demanded by love, and now suffer through the power of the lower tendencies. This little book makes clear a distinction sometimes overlooked, namely, that the painful circumstances called "bad Karma" are not caused by long-dead sinful acts, but by the inherent

qualities of the soul which prompted these acts, and gained strength by their commission. Another good teaching is that souls knit by spiritual affinity reincarnate generally at the same time and locality, in varying relations of kith or kin.

The book is supposed to be the retrospect of one in Devachan. Of this state, which is not a place, it is written, "Time in Devachan is like that idea of it which the 'sweet singer of Israel,'—ah me! how far he had seen along the Shadowy Ages himself!—attributes to his Diety. Do you remember? 'A day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years but as one day.' So, in this Place of Souls, we know that time is, but we experience it not. The Law is kind as well as just. On earth men are kind or cruel, but they are never just. Here all is unfailing, inexorable justice."

A beautiful conception is the vision of "The Grey Angel," or Death. The key to the book is in the poetic lines. "All the experiences, glad and sorrowful alike, which men live through are but dreams when viewed from the standpoint of death, and perhaps death also is a dream. Perchance men are but dreams likewise, and it may be that when we shall awake from our dreaming at the last morning of eternity, we may find that eternity is a dream as well as Time. The worlds may all be made of dream-stuff, and souls themselves, the only realities now, may be only the 'baseless fabric of a dream.' Who can tell? Who knows? And I answer, God knows—and God is not a dream."

Such books do a great amount of propaganda work, because the interest of the plot carries along the casual reader into an acquiescence with the basic laws demonstrated, and leaves him with the thought, "these things *may* be possible." So it is hoped Miss Colsen will dream again, and be able to take more time in moulding her inspiration into visible shape.

E. S.

THE VAHAN, besides the news of the section and the usual answers to questions, has a very valuable synopsis of the ideas given out by ancient mystics in regard to the Augoeides the radiant body of the divine soul. "The Augoeides" is the 'causal body' and karmic vesture of the soul, in which its destiny or rather all the seeds of past causation are stored. This is the 'thread-soul,' as it is sometimes called the 'body' that passes from one incarnation to another.

THE BRAMAHVADIN keeps up to its high standard. The issue of Dec. 7th is devoted to an exposition of Divine Love as an element of the Vedantin philosophy and the great principle of Incarnation. The editorial shows why Incarnation (without which there can be no re-incarnation) has been a stumbling block to the Lemitic.

"The narrowly anthropomorphic and tribal conceptions of God which the Jews and Arabians have had all along, even after their religions ceased to be local and tribal, is responsible for their incapacity to comprehend the truth and beauty of the idea of Incarnation. The Christian Church still much under this influence recognizes only one instance of Divine Incarnation. But to understand properly the rational metaphysical foundation of the doctrine of Incarnation even in one case is to see its possibility in many others."

THE ENGLISH THEOSOPHIST gives "The Sphinx's Riddle," and discusses the significance of the Cross and "Death on the Cross." We quote, "To the ancient thinker's Deity geometrized, manifesting every state of being in mathematical form; and the Cross stands as the clearest representation of that condition of mind, soul, and body of beings about to be "born again" or invested with the powers of the Spirit, for it signifies a centre where forces from opposite directions meet and cut one another."

LE LOTUS BLEU of December gives the discourses spoken at the cremation of Mons. Arthur Arnould. Its translation of "Notes on Secret Doctrine" finishes. The Astral Plane by Mr. Leadbeater is continued, also the "Theosophic Glossary" of H. P. B. The article on Kama Manasic elementals by Mons. Pascal harmonizes with the "Astral Plane." We quote from it the following: "No one has a right to say that he cannot help his fellowmen; for each one possesses a lever, the mightiest in the world and that lever is Thought. Thought is the indestructible force, the energy which can be exercised in the depths of a dungeon as well as in a palace." Occult varieties treat of Alchemy and the evolution of metals. Future generations will speak of the evolution of metals as people of to-day speak of the evolution of animals. "The Gods" is a forceful and original article directed against Superstition and Materialism.

NOTES AND QUERIES gives the Brahminical Cycles; Planetary Analogies, and Ernest de Bunsen writes on "Mohamed's Place in the Church."

RECEIVED.—The "ANTAHKARANA," "THE LAMP," "THE TEMPLE OF HEALTH," "THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN," "THEOSOPHY IN AUSTRALIA," "PACIFIC THEOSOPHIST," "THEOSOPHIC THINKER."

Want of space this month compels us to omit the usual review of "Lucifer" and the "Theosophist."

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

[This Department will be devoted exclusively to children; questions and answers from Lotus Circles on Theosophical Subjects are invited and will receive special attention.]

THE MISTLETOE.

THE mistletoe hung not in castle hall but from the chandelier in the cosy parlor of Kathleen's home, now gay with Christmas holly and greenery. The little Kathleen sat gazing wonderingly at the pale green bough in the place of honor, pondering over her mother's words: "The mistletoe has a great history. It was the Druids' sacred plant."

"I do wish I knew! Mistletoe, tell me all about yourself. Please do, for I want to know so much, so much," thus prayed Kathleen in her heart. As her wish was unselfish and helpful, a desire for knowledge for the sake of knowledge, the answer came. Suddenly, yet without being startled, Kathleen saw a beautiful white-robed form standing apparently on the air, one hand resting on the mistletoe while the other held a knife of gold curved somewhat like a small sickle.

"I am the genius of the mistletoe," said the form. "I have come at your call to give you my history. Listen."

Thrice did the golden knife describe circles in the air; then Kathleen forgot herself in amaze for she found herself in a world of soft light, a world of music—not piano music, nor band music, nor even violin music. "Kathleen, I am a famous plant; my history goes back to the time when Asgard was the only city in the world—Asgard, the city of the Asas or gods, and gods are world-builders. There were many Asas, Odin the All-Father, the motherly Idun who grew the apples of immortality, Thor the hammer-wielder, the beautiful Freya, Skade the maid of battle and a host of them, but chief of the host was the radiant Baldur. He was the joy of Asgard, for Baldur was the sun. Outside of Asgard were mighty forests. In that guise slumbered the races of men and women that were to awaken into life and build cities to rival Asgard.

One day sorrow entered into the bright city of Asgard. The Asas whispered mournfully among themselves for a doom had been spoken by a Power far above the power of Odin, and thus spake the doom:

"From the dark world outside of Asgard, from those forests which are slumbering people, will come an enemy who will kill Baldur, the Beautiful, and Asgard and the Asas are doomed. This is the doom of the Ragnarok."

Was it any marvel that the Asas trembled? Then Frigg, the mother of Baldur, said: "Our Baldur shall not die. I will go into the gloomy world and prevent the doom." Frigg went forth and traveled over mountains, over seas, through the dark forests, into the caves of the under-world, and from the stones, the earth, the water, the fire, from every tree, shrub and plant which grows out of the ground, from iron and lead, from silver from gold, from flint—from all she exacted an oath that never would any one of them hurt Baldur. But as she was passing through the woods exacting this oath from all that lived therein, she spied hanging from a wild apple tree a tiny plant that grew out of the hearts of the tree like a desire growing out of our hearts. It was so puny, so insignificant that Frigg laughed at the idea of making it take the oath. "That little parasite can never hurt my Baldur; the tree out of which it grows shall give me the oath—that is enough." And Frigg passed on leaving the mistletoe free, the only thing in all the earth that had not taken the oath to do no harm to Baldur. Frigg returned to Asgard triumphant, and the Asas began to amuse themselves by hurling missiles at Baldur, who him-enjoyed the fun, for the missiles, faithful to their oath, always fell to earth at a safe distance from the sun-hero.

At length Loki resolved to kill Baldur for the wicked Asa had grown jealous of the love showered upon Baldur. Now Loki was a great magician, and by his magic arts soon discovered that the mistletoe had not taken the oath. Loki made an arrow of the mistletoe, and one day when the Asas assembled to see their shafts fall harmlessly at Baldur's feet, he placed the fatal bolt in the hands of Hoder, the blind Asa whose aim Loki directed. The aim was true, the mistletoe arrow fulfilled the doom. Baldur the Beautiful lay dead, and darkness reigned over Asgard. Ragnarok began.

In after ages, a noble and learned caste among the Kelts called Druids honored the death of Baldur by offering the mistletoe on the altar of the sun.

The gathering of the mistletoe was the festival of the year. The priests and priestesses of the Druidic order, robed in white and preceded by the consecrated youths and maidens, walked in procession to the trees upon which grew the mistletoe. The knife which cut it was of gold. The people threw themselves on the ground, the priests and priestesses, youths and maidens chanted and made music when the High-Priest or Arch Druid severed the plant from its parent tree. The sacred branches were then carried with the utmost reverence to the temples.

The genius vanished before Kathleen could say "Thank you."

"Well, Mistletoe, you have a wonderful history, and think how we dance and romp under you to-day!"

Kathleen was very quiet that evening; her eyes often rested on the mistletoe, for she still saw in memory the genius of the plant that wrought the doom of Baldur.

AN OLD IDEA IN A NEW DRESS.

IN A lovely nook on Mark West Creek dwells a small band of people who are putting into actual practice the one great ideal of Theosophy; viz., that of true Brotherhood. They are living day after day the principles and truths we talk and write about. These people publish a paper, "The Altrurian," whose motto might well be, "Overcome evil by good," so nobly does it enter the Arena to do battle for the Right.

"The Altrurian" tells of a new crusade. The crusaders are the boys and girls of to-day who will be the men and women of to-morrow. These "Knights and Dames" constituting the "New Chivalry," vow themselves to the work of destroying selfishness, greed and injustice. Their creed is Love and Helpfulness; their doctrine Altruism.

Now here is an idea for our boys and girls of theosophic mind, no matter of what age. Who will come forward and start the new chivalry to lead the greatest crusade of history; the crusade not to rescue the Tomb of Christ, but Christ himself from the tomb of selfishness? No money needed, only unselfish love and cheerful will.—ED.

AIDS.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS IN JANUARY NUMBER.

20.—Is intellectual development necessary for the comprehension of spiritual truths?

If by intellectual development the questioner means school training or the learning of Universities, the answer is *most assuredly not*. Some of the greatest seers have sadly lacked the world's culture. But if by intellectual development is meant reasoning power, close observation, a knowledge of Nature's processes, a strong mind and well-endowed brain, then the answer is a very emphatic "Yes." Clear vision demands a perfect mental instrument. Only the strong soul can endure the light of God's face.

21.—A Black Magician uses his knowledge and power for selfish purposes, to enslave others, to aggrandize self. Separateness is his ruling motive; power his aim. The White Magician seeks not his own ends and aims but the good of the race. He forgets self in service. His ruling motive is love; his aim—Union with his Higher Self.

22.—Fire is the name we give to the spirit of energy, which creates, preserves, destroys. The "Secret Doctrine" speaks of forty-nine fires.

Notice the form of flame, it tells a great deal. The fire that we are familiar with is sunshine rushing out of its prison, where it has been fettered for ages untold, back once again to its sunshine condition and home.

23.—According to the "Secret Doctrine" physical man made his appearance about 18,000,000 years ago.

NEW QUESTIONS.

24.—What is best proof of the immortality of the Soul?

25.—Is there any foundation for the superstition in regard to the wearing of certain gems?

26.—Why are Theosophists so anxious to teach the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation?

27.—What is the Kali Yuga?